

[31st October 1931]

NON-OFFICIAL BUSINESS.

IV.—BILLS.

(1) THE TIRUMALAI-TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS BILL.

* Mr. M. A. MANIKKAVELU NAYAKAR:—" Mr. President, Sir, I beg to move that the Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanams Bill (Bill No. 17 of 1931) be referred to a Select Committee consisting of Members whose names I will give presently.

" Sir, the Bill has been published in the *Fort St. George Gazette* on the 18th August 1931. Before I make a reference to the general provisions of the Bill, I wish to refer briefly to the history of the Devasthanam. Sir, the Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanam is one of the richest, or rather the richest, Devasthanam in Southern India. Pilgrims go to that temple from far and wide, in fact from all parts of India. The Devasthanam consists of the main temple at Tirumalai and many subordinate temples at Tirumalai, Tirupati and Tiruchanur. All the temples are situated in the district of Chittoor from which the hon. the Chief Minister hails; and it is particularly fortunate for us that he should be in charge of this portfolio of endowments. I have no doubt that he, as a true and sincere follower of the late revered Raja of Panagal, would be very much interested in placing this piece of legislation on the statute book.

" Sir, let me briefly refer to the management of this Devasthanam. In olden days, the Devasthanam seems to have been managed by Hindu Kings, and after their fall, the control and management of the Devasthanam seem to have gone into the hands of the Nabob of Carnatic who through his Revenue officials was managing it. Then the East India Company came in, and through their Revenue department or the Board of Revenue, under Regulation 7 of 1817, had been managing the Devasthanam. There had been no complaint about the management of the Devasthanam when it was under them. But in the year 1843, I do not know for what reasons, probably under instructions from Home, the East India Company thought it proper that they should divest themselves of this duty. They had been trying hard to find suitable persons to manage this Devasthanam, but they were not able to get hold of proper persons, and unfortunately for the Devasthanam, in the year 1843, on the recommendation of the then Collector of North Arcot, the East India Company appointed one Sévadas of a small mutt called Hathiramjee Mutt to be the sole Vicharanakartha of the Devasthanam. The bad days of the Devasthanam began from that date. From the year 1843, the management of the Devasthanam was anything but satisfactory, and the whole state of affairs has been a complete scandal. Let me give a few facts about the mismanagement of the administration under the Vicharanakartha who came from the Hathiramjee Mutt. In the Statement of Objects and Reasons some of the defects of the administration and the necessity for this legislation have been set forth. A large number of pilgrims make rich offerings to the Deity, but the authorities of the mutt, under the guidance of the Vicharanakartha, divert the offerings from the Deity to the Vicharanakartha or the manager or

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some authority of the mutt. There are large estates which are managed by the Devasthanam. In fact about seven or eight taluks, or nearly half the district, are owned by the Devasthanam, but the management is bad. A lot of money is expended on litigation and sometimes decrees are got, though belated, and even such decrees are not executed in time and are allowed to be time-barred. The details of such mismanagement have been given in the appendix with reference to an interpellation by the hon. Mr. Basu Dev in questions and answers placed on the table of the House yesterday. I do not wish to go into details now but at a later stage I will refer to some of the important defects that have been pointed out. Articles are supplied to the Devasthanam on a large scale, such articles as ghee, camphor, musk, etc. There is no proper supervision over the supply of these articles and even inferior articles are supplied. One or two instances are noted in this statement how far musk pieces of stone and cloth have been supplied which the authorities did not note or did not think fit to note. For such a big Devasthanam there is no proper accommodation for pilgrims at Tirumalai, and no sanitary arrangements worth the name.

“Then with regard to the staff, there is a large staff employed by the Devasthanam, and they have to be working at the whim and caprice of the Vicharanakartha; there is no fixity of tenure and their service is precarious. According to the whims and fancies of the Vicharanakartha, the servants are employed and dismissed. With regard to the gross mismanagement and misappropriation I will refer to the judgment of the District Judge of Chittoor at page 57. The then District Judge of Chittoor, Mr. Manavedan Rajah, summarizes the allegations in regard to this matter—in O.S. No. 31 of 1898—as follows:—

‘It will thus be seen that from 1843 (that is, the fateful day on which the control of the Devasthanam passed from the East India Company into the hands of the Hathiramjee Mutt) down to the present time, November 1901, successive Mahants have been mismanaging and misappropriating temple funds which there are no adequate and proper means to recover. The existing system is thus proved to be inadequate. A change is therefore necessary. Thus the first Mahant appears from the accounts to have misappropriated Rs. 92,000 and odd. The second Mahant was found to have defrauded the temple to the extent of Rs. 2,28,000 and odd. The third Mahant was convicted of misappropriating Rs. 2,27,000 and odd. The fourth Mahant was sued for the recovery of Rs. 1,30,000. The defendant (i.e., the present Mahant) is charged with misappropriation of Rs. 6,27,000.

‘Then with regard to the charges under litigation.

‘Under this head the second Mahant spent Rs. 52,000, the third Mahant Rs. 93,000, the fourth Mahant Rs. 14,000, and the defendant Rs. 30,000 up to the date of suit.’

“In the District Court a scheme was framed. Then it was taken up before the High Court and the High Court Judges have made this remark about the management:—

‘. . . the history of what took place subsequent to Seva Doss’ death is, to put it shortly, a record of waste and embezzlement’. ‘The Mahants have shown themselves to be utterly incompetent to discharge the duties of the office properly and that the surplus income has been misappropriated by them, partly for their own personal use and partly for the aggrandisement of the Mutt.’

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“ But the Mahant has large resources. He did not leave matters there, but took up the question to the Privy Council and the Privy Council framed an ex parte scheme which is now in force. But, Sir, as it has been pointed out in this statement, the scheme though on paper it may appear to provide for the exercise of proper control, in practice no such control was exercised as was thought to be necessary. It may be asked, Sir, that after the passing of the Hindu Religious Endowments Act II of 1927, the Hindu Religious Endowments Board could have sufficient control over this Devasthanam. But the powers of the Hindu Religious Endowments Board are after all subject to the Scheme, and therefore their powers are limited; and even when they began to exercise their limited powers, the Mahant with his large resources puts up all sorts of objections in the District Court and completely nullifies the efforts of the Hindu Religious Endowments Board to exercise proper control. The properties of the temple, both movables and immovables, are worth nearly two crores of rupees and the income per annum for the Devasthanam is nearly 15 lakhs. Such a big Devasthanam with such a large income is now left under the management of a body which has been repeatedly commented upon and criticized, and the remarks of the District Judge will clearly show that the management is very bad and discloses a scandalous state of affairs.

12-15 P.M. “ Therefore, Sir, it would be clear that there is great necessity for having effective control over these Devasthanams. Any attempt to amend the existing Scheme would be infructuous and litigation would be protracted and ultimately it would not serve the purpose which we all so much desire. The only course therefore is to take effective and proper control over the Devasthanams by means of this legislation.

“ I will now briefly refer to the general provisions of the Bill. Under the Bill the control is sought to be vested in the Hindu Religious Endowments Board which would exercise such control by appointing a full-time Commissioner who would be at the head of all secular affairs of the Devasthanams. The appointment of the Commissioner will be made by the Government on the recommendation of the Endowments Board which has got vast experience in the management of temples.

“ The Bill does not seek to interfere with the religious rites and affairs of the Devasthanams. The Vicharanakartha will continue to be the person, who happens to be the head of the Hathiramjee Mutt, and will have charge of the religious affairs of the Devasthanams.

“ Then, there is provision made for an Advisory Committee to advise the Commissioner and the Hindu Religious Endowments Board. Provision has also been made for proper audit of the budget. As it is, under the Scheme, it is only required to file a budget in the District Court and there is no provision for getting any change made in it. The Mahant simply files the budget in the District Court. No person has any right to interrogate him on it or interfere with it. Provision also exists in the Bill for proper audit of the accounts.

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According to the Bill a proper budget has to be prepared and sent in time through the Commissioner to the Hindu Religious Endowments Board and this body has power to revise and do such other things necessary in the interests of the Devasthanams.

"No doubt, Sir, there would be some difference of opinion regarding the provision in the Bill relating to the manner of the constitution of the Advisory Committee and the number which it should consist of. These differences could be easily settled in the Select Committee. At this stage it is only necessary for us to go into the main provisions of the Bill. I hope every hon. Member of the House will agree with me that this piece of legislation has been long overdue and that every effort should be made to place these Devasthanams of Tirumalai, Tirupati, etc., on a proper footing providing for effective control over their affairs.

"I therefore move to refer the Bill to a Select Committee consisting of the following Members:—

The hon. Diwan Bahadur B. Muniswami Nayudu.
 Mr. D. V. Narasimhaswami.
 Diwan Bahadur C. S. Ratnasabhapati Mudaliyar.
 The Zamindar of Mirzapuram.
 Mr. R. M. Palat.
 „ M. A. Muthiah Chettiyar.
 Rao Sahib P. Subrahmanya Chetti.
 Rao Sahib C. Jayaram Nayudu.
 The Advocate-General.
 Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar.
 „ C. Basu Dev.
 „ K. Koti Reddi.
 „ M. A. Manikkavelu Nayakar.
 „ Sami Venkatachalam Chetti.
 Dr. P. Subbarayan.

"Sir, with your permission, may I crave leave of the House to suspend Standing Order 39 (2) to enable me to add the following names also to the Select Committee:—

Rao Bahadur T. A. Ramalingam Chettiyar.
 Mr. A. B. Shetty.
 „ C. R. Parthasarathi Ayyangar.
 Diwan Bahadur M. Gopalaswami Mudaliyar.
 Khan Bahadur Yahya Ali Sahib Bahadur.
 Swami A. S. Sahajanandam.
 Mr. Daniel Thomas.
 „ Yakub Hasan."

Mr. M. A. MUTHIAH CHETTIYAR:—"Mr. President, in rising to second the motion of my hon. Friend. . ."

Mr. C. R. PARTHASARATHI AYYANGAR:—"Sir, I rise to a point of order and seek your ruling upon this point. The motion has been moved that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee. The debate

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on the motion has therefore to be conducted on the merits and demerits of the various points referred to in the Statement of Objects and Reasons. It is known to several hon. Members of this House that the Endowments Board and another petitioner Mr. T. K. Alasingaravarada Thathachariar of Tirupati have filed a petition before the District Court of Chittoor for framing adequate rules under the scheme of the Privy Council. It is C.M.P. No. 219 of 1930 under O.S. No. 31 of 1898. It is open to anybody to look into the allegations made in that petition. They are identical with the grounds set forth in the Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to this Bill. Only in the one it is in a condensed form and in the other in an extended form. For the information of my hon. Friends I will read out the parallel references. I hold in my hand a copy of the petition now pending in the District Court.

'In the matter of the Privy Council scheme relating to Tirumalai, Tirupati, etc., Devasthanams.

Between

The Commissioners of the Endowments Board, etc.

and

The Vicharanakarthas of Tirumalai, etc., Devasthanams.

Petition filed on behalf of the petitioners under clauses 2 and 10 of the order, in the Privy Council Scheme sheweth:—

1. That the first petitioner is the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Board, the 2nd petitioner its President and the 3rd petitioner is the Prathama Acharya Purusha holding important Mirasi offices in the Tirumalai, Tirupati, etc., Devasthanams. The Tirumalai, Tirupati, etc., Devasthanams are the richest temple in Southern India. Every Commissioner of the Board is an ardent worshipper of the said temples and the Board is charged with the general superintendence and management of the said temples."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"Is the hon. Member presenting a petition to the Council?"

Mr. K. P. RAMAN MENON:—"Sir, we have not been supplied with copies of those papers."

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"I do not think it is quite in order for the hon. Member from Chittoor to present a petition in this haphazard fashion. I should like to hear him if he has anything to say in favour of his point of order apart from the petition that he has got in his hands."

Mr. C. R. PARTHASARATHI AYYANGAR:—"The petition I now read from is the petition filed by the Endowments Board on matters which are directly the subject matter under discussion in this hon. House at this moment. Standing Order 27 (2) says: 'A Member while speaking must not refer to any matter on which a judicial decision is pending. The matter in respect of which a judicial decision is now pending is contained in the petition (filed in the District Court) which I am reading. The Bill now under discussion covers the same grounds covered by this petition filed by the Endowments Board. The petition requests the Court to frame additional rules to control the action of the Mahant or Vicharanakarthas. Here with

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the same object in view we are attempting a legislative enactment. Therefore I was simply referring to the provision or provisions of the Bill and the contents of the petition now pending a judicial decision. The allegations made in the petition are the same as those mentioned in the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill, viz., inadequate supervision, wastage of funds, mismanagement and so on. The Bill in its Statement of Objects and Reasons says that there is imperative need to provide better accommodation for pilgrims at Tirumalai, etc., and that unwary pilgrims are misled into making their offerings at wrong quarters, etc. The petition also says the same thing. It says that it is necessary to frame additional rules regarding the receipts of all offerings, incomes, etc. The petition also submits that the decrease in income is mainly due to the respondent being in charge of the collections. So, the object of both the petition and the Bill is the same. Again, in another portion the petition contains the following:—

‘The Treasurer or the assistant treasurer have no power to check or punch the tickets under the existing rules or have they power to prohibit the admission of pilgrims for special sevas without tickets or the free performance of festivals for the benefit of the individual pilgrims. The income from Arjithams, etc., amounts to nearly two lakhs of rupees a year. Then there is the complaint about the purchase of provisions, etc. It is said therein that the foodstuffs and other provisions are now purchased for the temples for a lakh and a half rupees a year which is nearly twice as much as in the year 1911, and that the best quality or the proper quantity has not been supplied to the temples in consequence. The discretion given in the acceptance of the tenders has been abused in many cases by the respondent (Mahant) and it is learnt that in certain cases the contractors were mere name-lenders for some Byragis or other disciples of the Mutt.’”

Mr. V. P. NARAYANAN NAMBIYAR (*interrupting*):—“Mr. President, Sir, Standing Order 27 (2) has been pressed into use by my hon. Friend, Mr. C. R. Parthasarathi Ayyangar. I should like to raise another point of order. Sir, in the same Standing Order which my hon. Friend relies upon, the following sentence occurs: ‘The matter of every speech must be strictly relevant to the matter before the Council.’ Sir, an hon. Member while speaking must not refer to any matter on which a judicial decision is pending. So, when the Mover of the Bill was making his speech, if he referred to any matter on which a judicial decision is pending, it was the business of the hon. Gentleman to have raised the point of order then and drawn your attention to it. I submit, seeing that he did not raise the point at that stage, the question does not arise at this stage.”

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“Mr. Parthasarathi Ayyangar will finish his point of order.” 12-30
p.m.

* Mr. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—“May I submit, Sir, that the point of order that has been raised may be confined to a short statement instead of illustrating that point of order by reading in extenso all the statements made in the petition filed in the District Court of Chittoor and also the statements made in the Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to this Bill? It seems to me to be sufficient if he illustrates his point of order by quoting one single instance.”

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Mr. C. R. PARTHASARATHI AYYANGAR:—"I wanted to compare the provisions of the present Bill with the existing state of affairs which formed the subject-matter of enquiry in the District Court of Chittoor. I waited till the hon. Member who moved for the introduction of this Bill finished his speech so that I might place all the facts which form the subject-matter of enquiry in the District Court of Chittoor and also the provisions of the present Bill before the whole House just to show how both these things are identical."

Mr. C. BASU DEV:—"May I ask if the hon. Member is reading from a speech?"

* **The hon. the PRESIDENT:**—"I have to say that we cannot strictly apply that Standing Order to the question now raised. I do not think there is any point of order."

* **Mr. M. A. MUTHIAH CHETTIYAR:**—"Sir, it is very gratifying to note that this is not a party measure. On the other hand it is a non-party measure inasmuch as Members of almost all the various sections of this House have given notice of the Bill. However, it is very essential that there should be unanimity of opinion in this House on this measure. Though it is not entirely a piece of social legislation, all the affairs concerning this temple are of interest to the public. The millions of people who come to worship do not know that there is such a thing as Hathiramji Mutt different from the temple. These Mahants and Bairagis do not owe any allegiance to the temple, nor have they endowed any property of their own, to this temple. It may be that the temple has become richer during the term of office of the Mahants as trustees of the temple. There is no private right of the Mahant involved in this question, which we have to take into consideration on this occasion. As regards the management of the affairs of the temple, for the past 80 years by the Mahants, it is very interesting to note what the hon. Judges of the High Court have said on this point. It has been very well summarised by the Hon'ble Judge of the High Court and subsequently approved by Their Lordships of the Privy Council as a 'record of waste and embezzlement.' There have been a number of complaints against the administration by pilgrims and others. In 1901, Mr. K. C. Manavedan Rajah, the learned District Judge of Chittoor, gave out in his judgment in O.S. No. 31 of 1898, what his opinion was with reference to this Mutt and by hon. Friend from North Arcot has just now read out extracts from it. If hon. Members go through carefully the able memorandum submitted by the President of the Hindu Religious Endowments Board, placed on the table of the House favouring this Bill, they will come to the conclusion that this Bill is very necessary especially in these days of social reform and social legislation.

"Sir, in the midst of their extravagances, the Mahants have not cared for the pilgrims. It is not a place where hundreds of pilgrims worship, but it is a place where thousands of people go every day. It is the comfort of pilgrims that we have to take into consideration above all things. These pilgrims have not good residences to stay

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there and they are not admitted easily into the temples unless they have the favour of the Bairagis. With regard to the provisions and articles purchased for the temple it is said that the whole affair is hopelessly mismanaged, that tenders are indiscriminately accepted, that the rules governing these are not adhered to. This Devasthanam has very large estates comprising two or three taluks. For the management of such large estates an able administrator should be at the head of affairs. I learn that the ryots are not contented. Recently there was a deadlock between the ryots and the temple authorities. There are arrears of land revenue to the extent of six or seven lakhs of rupees. In the management of a big concern like this where there are large temples and estates, necessitating the services of a large number of employees, these employees should have security of tenure, definite terms of service, and also an assurance that those terms will be adhered to. Various complaints have been made that some employees have been dismissed, others suspended and in the case of a few others increments stopped without any principle. A number of educational institutions are under the control of the present Mahant. No doubt the present Mahant is an educated man. But there is no guarantee that all his successors should be educated persons as the Mahant has the right to nominate anybody whom he chooses as his successor. As a matter of fact he may nominate even a minor. To entrust such a big establishment, these large estates and schools in the hands of the Mahant is not at all a businesslike proposition. The temple and the Math have been so wound up together that many cannot distinguish them as two separate institutions. It is alleged that the Math has been enriched at the cost of the temple, that the Bairagis in the Math make money from the pilgrims. The South Indians and the North Indians come all the way to worship Lord Venkateswara only and they do not owe any allegiance to the Math.

“ In the past attempts have been made for the better management of this institution. There is the scheme as a result of Privy Council decision. I need not take the House through the protracted proceedings in the District Court, the High Court and the Privy Council, in this connexion. According to the present scheme only a copy of the budget has to be filed by the Mahant in the District Court and nobody can scan it. So far as this temple is concerned, although there is the Hindu Religious Endowments Act, we cannot effectively apply that Act to this temple inasmuch as we have to apply it subject to the scheme. So the Hindu Religious Endowments Board are helpless in this matter. They are not able to exercise control over it. They are not even able to get information as to the affairs of the temple. To a letter from the Hindu Religious Endowments Board, dated September 1925, to the Mahant, the latter replied, that having regard to the decision of the Privy Council, it is enough if he files a copy of the budget in the District Court and that he is not bound to reply the Board's letter. This only shows that that the present Act is ineffective and this is patent from the President of the Hindu Religious Endowments Board's memorandum before us. Some of the worshippers have

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launched suits against the Mahant, but all in vain. It is too idle to expect private persons to set right things against a person like the Mahant with vast resources at his disposal. One of the allegations made against him is that he spends plenty of money in litigation, and therefore nobody can afford to continue a protracted litigation against him. As a matter of fact in the previous litigation the other side was not represented in the Privy Council during the last stages of the case. It is said that under the present scheme the District Judge can look into the affairs of the temple. But I believe District Judges are generally averse to interfere in such matters. You cannot expect the District Judges to devote that amount of time and energy which are necessary. As a matter of fact although the petition referred to by my hon. Friend Mr. C. R. Parthasarathi Ayyangar was filed in 1930, I do not think that it has reached any stage for decision. It only shows the delay in litigation and that Courts cannot interfere usefully in these matters. Sir, the enactment of a separate law was found necessary by Mr. E. F. Elliot so long ago as 1869.

“ Mr. E. F. Elliot, in his judgment in O.S. No. 14 of 1867 (delivered in 1869) expressed his opinion that the system of management that had been prevailing since 1843 was itself wrong and added: ‘ this I consider must continue to be the case until a radical reform is effected by some other Act of Legislature either by reverting to the system of Government management, which while it lasted proved apparently most successful and efficient as well as economical or of putting the management of these pagodas on some better footing than under the control and superintendence of ascetics, who are essentially men not versed in business or the ways of the world, for it cannot be expected that one ascetic can be a better secular manager than another or that better results are to be derived by the dismissal of the present incumbent.’ The need then felt for a separate Act of Legislature is more imperative now, than ever before.

“ With regard to the provisions of the Bill, I have only to say that they are moderate and well balanced. There may be some defects here and there, but they can be rectified in the Select Committee. There are three noteworthy features in the Bill, viz., (1) the Commissioner, (2) the Vicharanakarthas and (3) the Advisory Committee. The Commissioner is asked to look after the secular management of these institutions. I hope hon. Members will realize the necessity for a responsible Chief Executive Officer,—no matter what you call him,—whether Commissioner or Peshkar or head clerk—to manage an estate which yields an annual income of 16 lakhs of rupees, if any good is to be derived from the management of such an estate.

“ Every day hundreds of pilgrims visit the place and elaborate arrangements have to be made for the proper collection and management of the whole of their offerings which they give piece-meal. I am prepared to assume that the present Mahant is quite a competent man in spite of his recent illness when he was not supposed to be of sound mind. But where is the guarantee that future Mahants will be able to

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satisfy the qualifications necessary for the management of this institution? It is true that he is deprived, by this Bill, of the uncontrolled powers which he is now enjoying. The Commissioner is only a nominee of the Government and is given powers only to manage his own office, and collect the revenue that is derived from the estate. He is not given powers to interfere with the temporal affairs of the temple, nor with the persons employed by the Mahant to conduct religious ceremonies of the temple. The serious objection to the Bill by the Mahant is the appointment of the Commissioner, if the Bill is passed into law. I should consider that if this Bill is passed without making provision for the appointment of a chief executive officer, viz., the Commissioner, it will be nothing. It will be worse than the present state of affairs. With regard to the Vicharanakarthā and his position as provided in the Bill, I can only say that the Bill does not try to impair his dignity. It will enable him to devote more time to the temple.

“As a matter of fact, this Mahant has not been able to devote much time to the temple on account of his ill health. He cannot manage both the landed estates and the temple and consequently the management is inefficient. It has been said by the other side that if this Bill was passed, it would reduce the Mahant to the position of a *monigar*. The Mahant will even then be the sole authority in the matter of the conduct of festivals, ceremonies and worship. A religious person like him should consider it a proud privilege to carry out these religious functions. If he considers it *infra dig* to occupy that position of religious head of the temple and carry out these religious functions, I consider it better, that he goes out completely.

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“With regard to the appointment of the Commissioner, I urge that his appointment should solely rest with Government and that the Mahant should have nothing to do with it. Otherwise, the Commissioner will be liable to the influence of the Mahant.

“With regard to the appointment of an Advisory Committee, I think it will tend to have a steadying influence, on the administration of the Devasthanam. Advisory committees are appointed for the management of bigger concerns such as the railways. Advisory committees have their place in the scheme of things and I do not see any reason why there should be any objection to constituting an Advisory Committee for the management of such a public institution like these devasthanams in question. I am sure such a Committee will work in the best interests of the people, the temple and the Mahant also. Though their resolutions are not binding on the Commissioner, they will have a great effect on his work and on the attitude of the Endowments Board and Government.

“With regard to the composition of the Advisory Committee, I am not particular that it should contain only representatives of the Legislative Council. Local bodies, as the District Board of Chittoor, the Municipal Council of Chittoor and other important bodies interested in the devasthanam may be asked to send representatives to the Committee. The number of members may be settled in the Select Committee.

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“ With regard to the justification for bringing this Bill, I would like to say a few words. As this temple was under the management of Government formerly, I think we are perfectly justified in bringing any measure for the better management of the devasthanam at any stage when we think that the present incumbent in office is not able to discharge his duties properly. In these days of democracy it is agreed on all hands that religious institutions should be controlled by Government. There was a great opposition to the Hindu Religious Endowment Bill when it was introduced and passed into law in 1925 and when the Act was amended in 1927. The Bills were passed with great difficulty. Between then and now public opinion generally has veered round in favour of the principle of control of religious institutions. If there is to be a referendum now on the question of Government control of religious institutions, I am pretty sure that the vote will be in favour of it. (Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti: ‘Question.’) The late Raja of Panagal was very much interested in the control of religious institutions. If he were living now, he would be one of the happiest persons to see a Bill of this kind becoming law. The principle of control of religious institutions was at first his thought. Now, it is gratifying to note that it is no more a party question and that it is the thought of all. With these words, I beg to second the motion.”

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“ It has been moved and seconded that the Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanams Bill (Bill No. 17 of 1931) be referred to a Select Committee consisting of Members a list of whom has been circulated already. For the convenience of the House I would suggest that all those hon. Members who have given notice of similar Bills might speak on this particular Bill and formally move their Bills later on in the order in which they are entered on the Agenda paper.”

Mr. C. R. PARTHASARATHI AYYANGAR:—“ Sir, I move—

‘ that the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon.’

“ My object in moving this motion is this. Certain facts relating to this Devasthanam after 1898 are now the subject of enquiry in the District Court of Chittoor. If we circulate the Bill for eliciting opinion on it, by the time we receive the opinions of the public, we will also have the benefit of the judgment of the Chittoor Court. All the decisions of Courts of Law on this subject were given before 1898. The Courts of Law have not pronounced any opinion on matters which have occurred since 1898. The matters referred to in this Bill and in the Civil Miscellaneous Petition will be decided by the Chittoor District Court shortly and we will have the benefit of their opinion.”

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“ Hon. Members need not refer to any matter that is pending before the Court, especially in view of the Standing Order to which I have referred.”

Mr. C. R. PARTHASARATHI AYYANGAR:—“ All I wanted to say was that it would be better if we had the opinion of the Court on several matters in addition to eliciting public opinion.”

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Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED:—"I second the motion."

* * The hon. the PRESIDENT:—"The amendment as well as the original motion are now for discussion."

Mr. T. C. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR:—"The devasthanam is of all-India importance. Pilgrims go there not only from South India but also from North India. Years back there was a suit filed by the Dharmarakshana Sabha of Madras for the purpose of framing a scheme for the management of the devasthanam. The Sabha also filed suits for the purpose of framing schemes for other devasthanams also. Some of the schemes are working well, while others like the Tirupati Scheme require alterations. In the view of the courts and also, I think, in the view of the Hindu Religious Endowments Board, the Tirupati Scheme requires alterations. Certain petitions have been filed in the court to have the scheme altered so that the temple may be better managed. The machinery of the court may or may not be adequate for the purpose. But if a Select Committee is appointed now to go into the question, it will take evidence—if it is so authorized—only from persons who are interested in it and who can come before it. But as this is a temple whose importance is not confined to particular localities or particular communities or groups of communities in South India, but which is of all-India importance, I submit that the Bill will suffer nothing but on the other hand, gain very much by time being allowed to the public for eliciting their opinion thereon. For these reasons, I heartily support the motion of Mr. Parthasarathi Ayyangar."

* Diwan Bahadur C. S. RATNASABHAPATI MUDALIYAR:—"Mr. President, Sir, I support the Bill and at the same time oppose the amendment of Mr. Parthasarathi Ayyangar. Mr. Srinivasa Ayyangar said that this devasthanam is of all-India importance. That is the very reason why I submit that a Bill of this kind is absolutely necessary. When the matter goes before the Select Committee, they will be at liberty to go into all the details and call for any records which they may think necessary for the purpose. It is not necessary for us here to say that the committee should take this kind of evidence or that kind of evidence. As hon. Members are aware, I obtained leave of this House at its last meeting for the introduction of the Tirumalai-Tirupathi Devasthanams Bill. Before I move that Bill I should like to say a few words on the present Bill itself. Both the Mover and the Seconder of this Bill have told the House the necessity for a measure of this kind at the present moment. They have made out such a clear case that I do not want to cover the same ground again."

"I request hon. Members to realize that in the case of this devasthanam, it is imperatively necessary to make satisfactory arrangements for its administration, even presuming that all the allegations about its present management are untrue. The devasthanam derives an annual income of more than ten lakhs. Large offerings are made by pilgrims coming from all over the country and extensive landed estates are owned by the devasthanams. The Hindu Religious Endowments Board

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has, in its memorandum, expressed its helplessness in improving the affairs of the devasthanam under the present management. Even the amendment of the rules, for which a petition has been filed in the District Court to which my hon. Friend Mr. Parthasarathi Ayyangar referred, would be merely tinkering with the existing system, while what is required is a thorough reorganization of the existing arrangement.

“ I will now briefly touch upon the main scheme of the Bill and explain its salient features. In the first place, the Bill provides for the bifurcation of the management of the secular and religious affairs of the devasthanam, so that a whole-time officer of administrative experience may be in charge of its secular affairs, while the Mahant may continue to supervise the proper performance of the religious functions, ceremonies and festivals in the main shrine and its allied temples. Such a bifurcation has been considered necessary by courts even in the case of some smaller temples. The chief executive officer proposed in the Bill, to be called a Commissioner of the devasthanam, will be appointed by Government in consultation with the Hindu Religious Endowments Board, on a salary not exceeding Rs. 1,000 per mensem. For an institution of such an importance as Tirupati it should not require much argument on my part to show that the officer at the helm of secular affairs should be of some status to command the esteem of the public and the subordinates in the service of the devasthanam. The Hindu Religious Endowments Board is empowered by the Bill to pass the budget prepared by the Commissioner with due regard to the views of the Vicharanakarthā and the Advisory Committee proposed to be constituted under the Bill. The Board will also frame by-laws relating to sanction for estimates, creation of posts, appointments and punishments of the officers and servants of the devasthanam, contracts for supply of articles and other similar matters which are now left unregulated. The servants who have to attend to the religious ceremonies and functions will be entirely under the control of the Vicharanakarthā, while the rest will be under the control of the Commissioner. It is also provided in the Bill that the Board should settle doubts that may arise as to whether a particular function comes under the secular or the religious side of the devasthanam service. The Board is also expected to determine the application of surplus funds in educational and other activities such as provision of sanitary arrangements, etc. In certain matters of importance provision has been made allowing the Vicharanakarthā or other aggrieved persons to resort to the District Court for getting the orders of the Board revised, for instance, its orders on the budget and its decisions in regard to the utilization of surplus funds. The provisions of the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act II of 1927 in regard to the right of persons having interest to institute a suit for obtaining reliefs and the appointment of an interim Vicharanakarthā under special circumstances are retained in the Bill. The Advisory Committee contemplated in the Bill will be the mouthpiece of the public in having the grievances brought to the notice of the Vicharanakarthā and the Commissioner with suggestions for effecting

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improvements in the administration of the devasthanam. The existing rights of the hereditary officers and servants of the devasthanam are specially safeguarded in the Bill.

“Before I conclude, I would request hon. Members to remember ^{1 p.m.} that, by enacting this measure, we are not taking away the vested rights of any family in which succession to trusteeship was hereditary. There is no use referring to the state of affairs prevailing in 1843 when the State divested itself of the management of religious institutions or to the conditions prevailing in 1907 when the Privy Council framed the scheme now in vogue. After the Reforms, public policy has changed and by the passing of the Hindu Religious Endowments Act of 1925 and the re-enacting measure of 1927, this legislature has provided for Government control over religious endowments through the Transferred side of the Government and the Hindu Religious Endowments Board working under it. Especially in the case of a devasthanam with such vast resources as Tirupati, special treatment is necessary, and in the nature of the case it cannot but be unique. It is no good instituting comparison between ordinary temples for which the ordinary provisions of the Hindu Religious Endowments Act might be enough. I would request hon. Members to treat this measure as an all-party one and to see that the Bill is passed into an Act at an early date.”

* Mr. A. B. SHETTY:—“Mr. President, Sir, I heartily support the motion brought by my hon. Friend, Mr. Manikkavelu Nayakar, and I oppose the amendment of Mr. Parthasarathi Ayyangar. The memoranda submitted by the Hindu Religious Endowments Board as well as by Mr. Ananthasayanam reveal a most scandalous state of affairs; it is not something but almost everything that is rotten in the state of Tirumalai and Tirupati. I invite the attention of hon. Members of this House to both these memoranda and request them to consider the state of affairs revealed by these memoranda. People in many parts of the country and in our coast also, have been under the impression that, after the introduction of the Scheme framed by the Privy Council, things have been going on well in Tirumalai and Tirupati. They will be sadly disappointed if they were to know that the misappropriation and waste that was characteristic of the regime in Tirumalai and Tirupati in the days before the scheme, is still continuing in some form or other as is evidenced from the remarks of judicial officers in several cases. I understand that in 1912 there was a suit by Sir S. Subrahmanya Ayyar for removal of the present Mahant. The Mahant is the boss of the whole show; his powers are arbitrary and uncontrolled. In the matter of the budget, his power over expenditure is uncontrolled, he can spend the vast income of the temple to the last pie and also draw upon reserves. Nobody has the power to scan the budget or to go into its merits; he can transfer the allotment from one head to another; he can increase expenditure and come forward with a supplementary budget. As regards the main items of expenditure, previous speakers have already drawn attention to what is happening there. Provisions worth more than one lakh of rupees are required every year; we are told that they are purchased through benami contractors or the tenders

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of the Mahant's proteges are accepted in preference to other tenders. As regards public works, we are told that, in the last 15 years, several lakhs have been spent on buildings. There is no expert scrutiny of the estimates prepared for these buildings nor is there any strict supervision over the construction of buildings. A petition in the court asking that works costing over Rs. 5,000 should have plans and estimates approved by an officer of a sufficiently high rank and they should be check-measured by him after completion is said to have been opposed by the Mahant. The devasthanam has a large establishment costing nearly Rs. 3 lakhs; the scale of pay is not fixed; new posts are said to be created and old posts abolished at the sweet will and pleasure of the Mahant; there are no service regulations nor any provision for appeals against punishment. Exorbitant amounts are spent on litigation. As the High Court remarked some time ago, what is saved from misappropriation is spent away in litigation. Audit is a farce; there is no concurrent audit; audit takes place long after the bills are passed and the auditor is not asked to find whether the expenditure is in accordance with budget provisions. The estate management is said to be hopeless; the investments over lands amount to several lakhs but the rate of interest that these investments fetch is said to be as low as 1 per cent and more than Rs. 7 or 8 lakhs of rent are said to be in arrears. There are no decent buildings or rest-houses for pilgrims at Tirumalai; the richer class of pilgrims have to go to the Math if they want comfortable lodgings and so many people are made to pay their offerings to the Math instead of to the temple on account of misrepresentations to the effect that whatever is paid to the deity at the temple goes to the temple officers and to the coffers of the Government. In the matter of surplus, the rules require that it should be invested every year; but this does not seem to be always done. Nor is the surplus utilized for proper purposes. Now the surplus is all gone. The Math is said to have been enriched at the expense of the temple; its income of Rs. 10,000 has now swelled to more than one lakh. There have been several petitions to modify the rules and all these petitions have been dismissed. There was a petition to modify the Scheme, filed by Mr. T. R. Ramachandra Ayyar, a leading advocate of this place so far back as 1912 for setting right the administration, and that petition was dismissed. All the attempts that have been made through the courts to set matters right in the matter of administration, have failed. Any further attempt for the modification of the Scheme will only result in protracted and costly litigation. The Mahant has got vast resources at his back and no individual worshipper is in a position to contend against him in the courts and spend money. The very passing of the Religious Endowments Act was resisted by the Mahant and he is said to have spent more than Rs. 30,000 for this purpose. The Endowments Board finds itself practically helpless in effecting any improvements in the administration of Tirupati. If the Board asks for any information, for copies of the budget or of audit reports, the Mahant refuses to give them; he says that the Religious Endowments Board has no jurisdiction over this temple and it has no right to call for the budget.

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The suggestions of the Board for any improvements are not accepted. The powers of the Board are subject to the Scheme; so, unless the Scheme is modified and definite powers of control are vested in the Board, the Board cannot do anything. The Board itself has been thinking of enacting a special legislation for the purpose of setting matters right in this devasthanam and it welcomes the present Bill. I am glad that this Bill is being sponsored by Members representing several sections of the House.

“The objects of this Bill have been explained by hon. Members who have already spoken and I do not think it is necessary to go over the same ground. We have to take note of the fact that the Mahant has neither founded this temple nor endowed any properties to it; he cannot claim to be the supreme arbiter over the affairs of the temple. The people of this province must have a voice in its management. A temple with such vast income should have honest and efficient management. If the Mahant has only the interests of the temple at heart, he should not seek to put impediments in the way of this Bill. Public opinion now is definitely in favour of legislation for the better administration and control of the religious endowments in this province. It is the duty of the hon. Minister who is responsible for the good administration of our temples to see that this legislation is placed on the statute book as early as possible. This Bill will of course receive due consideration from the Select Committee and be suitably altered before it is passed by this Council.”

* Khan Bahadur MAHMUD SCHAMNAD SAHIB Bahadur:—“Sir, I rise to support the motion for circulation of the Bill, before committing it to the Select Committee. An hon. Friend suggested that I should not interfere in the discussion of this Bill—as I am a Muhammadan and the Bill relates to a Hindu temple. It is true I am a Muslim and the devasthanam is supposed to belong to a community known as the Hindu. But, Sir, I may point out that these religions are not so very different. My own idea is that there is very little difference between the Hindu and Muhammadan religions, if you go to the origin of these religions and even to the method of worship. The Koranic conception of religion is that all who believe in one Supreme Being are Muslims or are of the true religion. The present tendency that is fast developing is that there cannot be but one religion, as there can be only one God, and that religion is God's religion. I also understand that some of the valuable properties belonging to the temple were endowed by Muslims.

“Sir, this temple is a very rich temple with very hoary traditions of its own; it has been in existence for several years. It is a well-known fact that people come to this temple from all parts of India. It is not only the people of this presidency that are interested in this temple but even people from other parts of India and of other religions are interested.

“One of the charges made against the Mahant is that he has been misappropriating the proceeds of the temple; no court, Sir, has, so far,

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held that the present Mahant is guilty of breach of trust. Another charge made against him is that he is employing *bairagis* for the management of the temple. Who are these biragis? Are they all ignorant people? Simply because they have given up worldly things, are they to be supposed to be fools or to know nothing about the affairs of this world? What about Mr. Gandhi? Is he not a sanyasi? Would you say that he is not capable of managing such temples? This is such an important matter that it should not be rushed through. I do not say that no reforms are necessary; some reforms may be necessary. But the Privy Council has framed a Scheme under which the temple is being managed now. The District Court of Chittoor is given power to appoint an additional manager; all safeguards have been taken to prevent mismanagement. It is admitted that budgets are being prepared every year; and copies of these budgets are filed in the District Court. When all these precautions are being taken, we should not rush to the conclusion that the affairs of the temple are altogether mismanaged or that the amounts of the temple are altogether misappropriated. I beg of this House to give sufficient time for the people and for the Members here to understand the import of the Bill. The Mahant has been managing the affairs of the temple for several years now. It is admitted that several schools have been started by him; several charitable institutions are being conducted and so many other useful things also are being done. The money and the temple are not going to be swallowed by anybody by the lapse of a few months. Let us give some time and not give the impression to the people that we are rushing through the Bill, because some people are interested in it. If the Bill is referred to the Select Committee now, you know what will happen. In a few days the Committee may submit some report. It may immediately be taken up for consideration and passed as usual, perhaps the hon. the President putting clause after clause to the Council while the Members have very little time to study the different aspects of this legislation. The others may not have sufficient time to know anything about it, but the whole thing will be passed. What I say is: there must be sufficient time for the people to study and understand the Bill. The Government also must appoint a committee to take evidence and to examine witnesses and the Government themselves must know where they stand. Therefore, Sir, I support the motion for circulation."

1-15
pm.

*Rao Bahadur T. M. NARAYANASWAMI PILLAI:—"Mr. President, I support the motion that this Bill be referred to a Select Committee and oppose the motion that it be circulated for eliciting public opinion. It is significant that the Mover and the Seconder of the amendment have not traversed the allegations made in support of the motion to refer this to a Select Committee. The main allegation in support of the motion for referring it to a Select Committee is that the administration of the devasthanam has been a record of waste and embezzlement and that there is need, in the interests of the public, for better management. That allegation remains unanswered. Mr. Parthasarathi Ayyangar referred to the fact that really the subject-matter is under investigation by the Court. This is significant, this only means that

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there is sufficient ground for being investigated by the Court. That shows there is something wrong with the affairs or the administration of the Tirupati devastanam. Therefore, the very ground that was urged by the Mover of the amendment is a point in support of the fact that a Bill of this kind is necessary, and the sooner it is referred to a Select Committee, the better it is for all concerned. Mr. T. C. Srinivasa Ayyangar then urged as a reason in support of the amendment, the fact that this temple is of an all-India character and that therefore sufficient time ought to be given to people in the north to express an opinion on the Bill. But I should be permitted to say that all the properties of the devasthanams are all situated in our presidency. We, in this presidency, have expressed strongly that the affairs of this devasthanam are not conducted properly. So, if the opinion of people outside the presidency is to be expressed at all, it should be based only on public opinion of people in this presidency. It is significant that so far there has not been a single suggestion that the administration is all right. If we here find the administration to be bad, it is up to us to come forward with proposals to set it right and not merely wait for the opinion of people outside who will be guided only by our own opinion.

“ Then came Mr. Schamnad who made a number of assertions, but I am sorry they are not at all based on facts. If he had been a pilgrim or even if he had paid a visit to the place, we could have given weight to his assertions. Therefore, to circulate the Bill for eliciting public opinion at this stage, is like delaying the matter which is admitted on all hands to be urgent and necessary. The Bill has not been introduced now for the first time. That there should be a Bill in respect of this devasthanam has been long in the air. If I am not mistaken, even in the last Council there were people who were anxious that a Bill of this kind should be introduced. Why, as a matter of fact, even when the last Hindu Religious Endowments Act was under consideration, efforts were made to bring this endowment under the Act. It was on account of the influence which the Mahant possessed that the attempt failed. Therefore, it is not as though this Bill comes before this Council for the first time. This has been before the public for the last six or seven years ever since 1925. (An hon. Member: ‘ Has the Mahant lost his influence now ? ’) Somebody asks me whether the Mahant has lost his influence. I am not able to answer it, but I may say that public opinion is now getting better informed on the matter. It is also significant that in support of this Bill there was in Madras a public meeting presided over by an eminent gentleman interested in the administration of religious endowments. As this Bill has been before the public for a very long time, I think sufficient time has been allowed for public opinion to assert itself—at least since the last Council when the leave for introducing this Bill was granted. After the publication of the Bill in the Gazette, public opinion, in so far as we know it, has expressed itself in favour of the present Bill. At the same time, it does not mean that if this Bill is referred to a Select Committee, public opinion cannot hereafter be expressed. For these considerations, Sir, I oppose the amendment and I support the motion of Mr. Manikkavelu Nayakar.”

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* Sriman M. G. PATNAIK Mahasayo:—"Sir, though the Bill is in form a new Bill, in substance it is only an amendment of the Religious Endowments Act. Already the Endowments Act extends to the temple and the Board has got some control over it; but there are certain difficulties. With a view to remove those difficulties this Bill is introduced, in other words, to do away with the Scheme of the Privy Council which can be set aside or modified only by a suit or other judicial proceedings which may take a long time. That is the reason why this Bill is introduced. Therefore, this is not a new Bill and it is not raising any new or fundamental principle. There is absolutely no reason why there should be circulation. All that is sought to be done is to appoint a commissioner, to be an associate, so to speak, of the trustee, and to apportion the functions between the two. There is also to be a consulting body, I think. The appointment of an associate to the trustee was included in the Scheme framed by the High Court before the matter went up to the Privy Council. Therefore, this idea too is not a new one. The Privy Council removed the provision for the appointment of an associate in its Scheme; and by this legislation, it is practically proposed to revive that provision. It may be said that the same result can be obtained by a suit; but that will be a more costly thing and take a very long time. Therefore, in order to save the Mahant and the people and the Hindu Religious Endowments Board all worry and unnecessary expenditure, this Bill has been introduced. There is no necessity, Sir, for circulating it at this stage."

* Rao Bahadur T. A. RAMALINGAM CHETTIYAR:—"Sir, I also stand to support the original motion and to oppose the amendment. My position is very simple. This is an endowment, a public endowment; and it is not an endowment the creation of which was due to anybody or which was specially contributed for by anybody. It is not a matter in which any person who has been managing the affairs of this endowment for a long time has thereby acquired any special interest either in its management or in any of the benefits arising therefrom. Such being the case, it seems to me that it is the duty of the public to provide for the proper administration of this endowment. That seems to me to be a position which cannot be questioned by any one. It also seems to me that unless the Council intervenes, there is no other satisfactory way of providing for a proper administration of this big endowment. The endowment is probably the biggest in India; it is probably one to which the largest number of people resort from all parts of India. Such being the case, our responsibility is all the greater—since it is situated in our province—to provide for its better administration. What do we find? Almost since the time the endowment was entrusted to the charge of the Mahant who is the head of this Math, we have been seeing some litigation or other has been going on in a most immoral way—if I may put it like that. This institution was handed over to the Mahant about the middle of the last century. Within a few years, litigation starts, petitions are filed in the courts, suits are filed in the courts, and as early as the year 1898, a suit for the proper administration of this endowment was filed in the Chittoor Court which

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went up to the Privy Council. The Privy Council had to frame a scheme ultimately; but in the meanwhile there were other suits by disinterested persons who formed themselves into this Dharmarakshana Sabha in the old days—people like the late Dr. S. Subrahmanya Ayyar, Mr. Ramachandra Ayyar and others. They cannot be said to be people who have no faith in religion or do not care for the proper administration of endowments. Such people thought that there ought to be a proper scheme prepared for the administration of this big endowment. They were not satisfied with the management of this institution by the Mahant. That is a fact. Not only that. Ever since the Privy Council framed its Scheme, almost every year we have been seeing some sort of legal proceeding going on in the several courts of the Presidency. This is not surely a satisfactory state of affairs; and the only way in which this can be avoided is by this Council taking charge of the matter and providing in an Act of its own for the proper administration of the endowment. If we do not do it, what is going to happen? Well, Sir, there will be interminable litigation; litigation means money and it means some interest to be taken in this matter by somebody or other. We have already got a man who is amply endowed with money—money belonging to the endowment—who is interested in keeping things as they are at present; and there are also others who have got no such means for carrying on litigation and whose only interest is the public interest for the proper administration and management of this endowment. I do not think if we, Members of this Council, realize our responsibility, we will allow this matter to be settled again in a court of law, as it can only mean further litigation, further litigation involving large funds belonging to the endowment being wasted, probably interminably going on for several years—waste of money, waste of energy, room for temptation on the one side and probably waste of money belonging to the endowment itself by people who are interested in keeping the present state of affairs. It seems to me, therefore, that our clear duty lies in preventing the people from going to courts of law, and providing a satisfactory method for administering this endowment. In saying this, I think I have given my reply to the motion moved by my Friend Mr. Parthasarathi Ayyangar for circulation. One ground on which he based his argument was that there is a suit pending in the Chittoor Court and that, if we waited, we would have the opinion of the District Judge. That is really what I want to avoid. I do not want further money to be wasted, nor do I want to allow any more time during which the endowment may be mismanaged in ways which may not appeal to Members here. The sooner we take charge of this matter, the better it is for all concerned. In that view, I oppose the amendment of Mr. Parthasarathi Ayyangar.

“It was also stated by Mr. Srinivasa Ayyangar that, unless the Select Committee is authorized by this House, it won't be in a position to know the views of the people outside. I beg, Sir, most respectfully, to correct him. Under Standing Order No. 39 (4), ‘A Select Committee may hear expert evidence and the representatives of any special interests affected by the measure before them.’ It is therefore always open to them to take the evidence of experts or of persons interested in the Bill.

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1-30
p.m.

" In a matter of this public importance, I do not think it would be difficult to obtain the evidence of any person except probably those persons who are not interested in this matter. Anybody can come and give evidence either in writing or on oral examination. So, I do not think anybody would be affected or prevented from expressing his opinions by our directly referring the Bill to a Select Committee, and leaving it to the Select Committee to go into the Bill in a detailed way.

" I will only refer to one point more, Sir, before I conclude, namely, that it is not absolutely necessary for the Members of this Council to agree to every detail of the proposals that are made for the administration of the endowments. It is quite open to the Select Committee, Sir, to go into the matter fully, hear expert evidence or the evidence of people interested in the matter and frame such a scheme as would satisfy everybody, and at the same time secure the proper administration of the endowment. It is open to them to do all this. As I conceive it, the only thing that the Select Committee cannot go into is the question whether any provision ought to be made anew and whether a Bill for proper administration ought to be passed or not. That they cannot do. But they will have to agree to frame some scheme for the administration of the endowment. That is the principle of the Bill, and I do not think that the Select Committee is entitled to go behind that principle. Leaving it aside, there are various other matters, such as the arrangements to be made and other details of the scheme to be worked out. I beg to submit that it is open to the Select Committee to go into all these questions. If any person has anything to offer in regard to the proposals already made or that are to be made hereafter, it is open to him to make representations before the Select Committee, and it is for the Select Committee to consider all these representations and frame as effective a scheme or proposal as they may find necessary. So, Sir, I do not think that anybody can really have any reason to fear that any matter is going to be specially shut out by this procedure of referring the Bill to a Select Committee. And it is not, as I already said, the case that public opinion or the opinion of persons interested in the Bill will not be available to the Select Committee unless the Bill is circulated for eliciting public opinion. So, Sir, it is for this reason that I am unable to agree with my hon. Friends, Mr. C. R. Parthasarathi Ayyangar and Mr. Srinivasa Ayyangar, in their view that the Bill should be circulated for eliciting public opinion. It is already high time, as I have said, that this matter is settled in some satisfactory way. This matter has been hanging on for a long time; indeed for nearly a century. The management was transferred to the Mahant, and afterwards there was a lot of litigation, and so it is high time that some sort of arrangement should be arrived at, especially in view of the fact that there is a suit pending in the Chittoor Court. I would ask the Council to expedite the matter and come to some conclusion on this question, so that there may be no need for the suit to be proceeded with. It is for these reasons, Sir, that I support very strongly the motion that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee."

The House then adjourned for lunch.

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After Lunch (2-30 p.m.)

**V.—ANNOUNCEMENT *RE* THE APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMEN
TO CERTAIN SELECT COMMITTEES ON BILLS.**

* The hon. the PRESIDENT:—“ I have to announce that I nominate Mr. W. M. Browning as Chairman for the two Select Committees regarding the Madras Gaming (Amendment) Bill and the Madras City Police (Amendment) Bill.

“ I nominate Mr. Basheer Ahmed Sayeed as Chairman of the Select Committee on the Bill to amend the Madras Elementary Education Act, 1920.”

IV—BILLS—*cont.*

(1) THE TIRUMALAI-TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS BILL—*cont.*

Discussion was then resumed on the Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanams Bill.

* MR. SAMI VENKATACHALAM CHETTI:—“ Mr. President, Sir, I welcome the introduction of a Bill, the object of which is to ensure efficient management and popular control of the Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanams. In order to justify an object of that sort and the consequent introduction of a Bill to ensure the accomplishment of that object, it does not seem to be necessary for anybody to allege acts of mismanagement and much less to prove them against the present Vicharanakartha. It is enough, Sir, if the public opinion is in favour of preparedness to take the management of a big religious institution like the Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanams and make such provisions to effectuate that object. Therefore the fact that a suit is pending in a court of law for framing a scheme or for making amendments in the existing Scheme which governs the management of that institution need not act as an impediment for the legislature to go on with this Bill. Any day I am of opinion that control of a popular body of any big institution is much more dependable and much less susceptible to corruptions and autocracy than the management of such institution by a single individual. Probably the individual trustees themselves of temples, hereditary or nominated, might sometimes feel the necessity of assistance of the members of the public who are interested in that institution.

“ Though as many as seven or eight hon. Members of this Council have given notice of Bills affecting the proper management of these devasthanams, it is practically one Bill that we have got to deal with. Therefore this House is denied the enlightenment that it would have derived had the Bills been the result of individual thinking of each of the hon. Members who have given notice of this Bill. Presumably all the Bills are drafted by a single author and it is whispered, Sir, that the Bill is the result of considerable thinking in the Hindu Religious Endowments Board. If my presumption is correct, it would have been indeed a very convenient matter for this Council, had that Bill been sponsored by the Government. The Government had been anxious to make improvements in the management of this temple for a considerably long time. When the Hindu Religious Endowments Act was before the legislature, it was thought that the Act aimed particularly at this devasthanam. But owing to some cause or another it was not possible

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to exercise effective control over the Tirupati Devasthanams under the existing provisions of the Hindu Religious Endowments Act. Therefore the necessity for a separate legislation has been felt by several people and I am not sorry that it has come to-day for the due consideration of the Council and I am also particularly glad that the Bill will be referred to a Select Committee with no previous commitments with regard to the adherence of this Council in respect of particular provisions of the Bill. What is agreed upon by hon. Members representing all parties is that this Council is prepared to draft a measure to ensure proper management and effective popular control over the Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanam affairs. Otherwise it would be necessary for us to mention even now our difference of opinion with regard to particular provisions of this Bill. I may frankly say that I am not in favour of several provisions of this Bill which seek to substitute the authority of the Commissioner in the place of the present Vicharanakartha. If the Council or the public are dissatisfied with the management of a single individual as susceptible of being abused, the same reasons apply with equal force, if not greater force, in respect of powers that is sought to be vested in the Commissioner. I know it may be said that the Commissioner's powers are not as unfettered as the Vicharanakartha's are and there is the Hindu Religious Endowments Board to check or control the acts of the Commissioner. Sir, I must here say that the Hindu Religious Endowments Board with all its advertised efficiency has not yet been able to convince either the public or this House of its effective and efficient management. As a matter of fact, its very existence is precarious. The salaries of several of the Commissioners of that Board are still perhaps in arrears and unless the Government advanced loans from time to time one cannot be sure of the continuance of the Hindu Religious Endowments Board. Unless the Government are prepared to put the Board on a satisfactory and permanent basis and make it as a limb of the Government, it will be a dangerous thing to entrust any power to the Hindu Religious Endowments Board. So, Sir, I am not enamoured of the existence of the Hindu Religious Endowments Board as a supervisory authority over the acts of the Commissioner. (Hear, hear.) Sir, even as we are anxious that the Government of our country should be in the hands of popular control responsible to the people, I would like that experiment is started with regard to an institution of this sort. We have given full autonomy to the local self-governing institutions. We have made the presidents of district boards and municipal boards responsible to the councils and their boards. I would like that instead of making the Advisory Committee as merely nominal only on the analogy of the railway advisory committees which would not at all be complementary to the advisory committee now proposed, I would make that Committee to be the arbiter of the affairs of the devasthanams concerned because they will be representatives of the people, they will be elected by the people, because they will be persons interested in the proper management of these temples and the estates connected with that temple. So, if you are a believer in democracy and if you think that self-government is a better substitute than even good government, I would insist, Sir, that more powers should be given to the Committee instead

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of either to the Vicharanakartha or to the Commissioner. Sir, however, the mere fact that the Commissioner is going to be a substitute to be appointed either by the Board or by the Committee, that mere fact is not going to change the character or the honesty of the persons thus appointed. If a Vicharanakartha with the large influence that he now commands and with the vast wealth that he now possesses is still suspected, to be guarded against what guarantee is there that a person appointed on a thousand rupees pay could be less susceptible to the same temptation which we fear would confront the Vicharanakartha? What guarantee is there that the Vicharanakartha and the Commissioner might not go in shares so far as the spoils from the affairs of this temple are concerned? Unless it be that the Commissioner that is to be appointed is recruited from the permanent and non-retired active servants of the Government, there is no guarantee—I say without meaning any offence to anybody—that retired officers or other persons who may be appointed temporarily for this purpose could be above temptation of being corrupt. I therefore warn those gentlemen, who think that they have done their best by merely substituting the Commissioner in the place of the Vicharanakartha, to be careful lest we should not be confronted even sometime later on with the same or similar set of difficulties as we are now confronted with.

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“ Sir, I have not so far heard, from the speeches of hon. Members who have spoken before me, what prevented them from giving the Committee more powers than they thought fit to give under the provisions of this Bill. It must be due to the fact that directly they did not take active part in the drafting of the Bill, if they have only wanted to convey their personal opinions on the present bill. But I have no doubt that, so far as the Committee is concerned, it would have been given wider powers and probably supreme control. But at the same time, it must be made plain that under the provisions of this Bill, the Vicharanakartha is reduced to a figure-head. There is no denying that fact. It might probably be the intention of those who are responsible for the introduction of this Bill to reduce him to such a position. I do not want to dispute their intention, nor am I prepared to say whether the Vicharanakartha would or would not be given more powers than what is ensured to him under this Bill. But there seems to be some misconception with regard to his existing duties. I do not think that the Vicharanakartha to-day is anything more than the secular head of that institution. I have not heard that he has got any share in the matter of religious functions except as any ordinary dharmakartha would be. I suppose he is a trustee of the institution in all secular matters; and there is no meaning in saying that so far as secular matters are concerned, we will take away his powers and that we will allow him to exercise the same powers he is now exercising in regard to religious matters. After all, every religious matter becomes secular at one stage or other, even as a secular matter may become a religious matter. If the Vicharanakartha wants a particular festival to be performed, say at 3 or 4 o'clock, on a particular day, is it a secular matter or is it a religious matter? It will be difficult to define where the secular matter

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ends and where the religious function begins; and so there is no meaning in saying that so far as secular matters are concerned, the Commissioner would be supreme and in religious matters the Vicharanakartha. If the Commissioner takes into his head to question the Vicharanakartha as interfering in secular matters of which he has got the supreme charge, then there will be no end of trouble, and he may say that the festival shall be conducted at 4 o'clock and not at 3. The Vicharanakartha might say Raghukalam sets in at 4 o'clock and so the festival should begin at 3 o'clock on that day. Then who is to judge that the festival must be celebrated at a particular time? These matters will naturally lead to a clash. It will be a ruinous thing to suggest two independent authorities over one institution. Either it must be frankly admitted that the Vicharanakartha has no power if he is going to be divested of those powers which are now sought to be vested in the Commissioner or the Commissioner must be made subordinate to the Vicharanakartha. That must be made clear. I have no doubt that all these matters will be gone into with due consideration in the Select Committee. I also think that the Select Committee, composed as it is, must not hesitate to receive assistance from people who are interested and who are willing to help us in this matter. Of course, there is no need to say either to the Select Committee or to the Council not to lose sight of the fact, namely, that we are determined to frame a measure to ensure the proper, effective and popular management of the Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanam affairs."

* Mr. K. KOTI REDDI:—"I rise to support the motion. In doing so, I hope that the objections that have been raised hereto will be carefully gone into at the time of consideration of this Bill by the Select Committee. I gather from the opinions already expressed that most of the objections are not against conferring the administration and management of the landed estates and the income of the temple into the hands of a Commissioner with a view to ensuring efficiency. My Friend, Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti—I do not know whether he has really supported the Bill or is against it—has no doubt put forward some arguments in regard to the powers of the Commissioner, which I hope will receive the attention of the Select Committee. He contended that even as the present Mahant with all his vast wealth and powers is suspected by some people to be not above corruption, so also it is not possible for the future Commissioner that is going to be appointed under this Bill to be above corruption. I admit he might be. But I am one of those who believe that there are persons even in this world, if they are properly selected by the persons responsible for the selection, who will be above corruption. We have known of several instances of public servants, very poorly paid, but who are still above corruption. At the same time, we have officers, very highly paid, concerning whom it cannot be so said. If we think that the world is corrupt and that everybody is corrupt, so nothing need and can be done, and such an argument should not be in our way. I think proper persons for the position can be found. Again there is this difference, that the Mahant is a hereditary trustee and it is not so easy to remove him from that position if he is found undesirable. However, it is for us to come to a conclusion whether

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a Commissioner is to be appointed for a definite period of years for a short term or long term to manage the estates. Again, Sir, it is much better that the Mahant is not looked upon merely as a secular head, as my Friend Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti seems to believe. Whatever legally he may be, the popular opinion with regard to the Mahant of Tirumalai-Tirupati temples is that he is a religious head, that he has a good deal to do with the functions and festivals and the performance of various ceremonies connected with the temples, and he is not really looked upon as a mere manager of the estates. As such, it will be much better if the Mahant is disburdened of his secular responsibility of managing the vast estates and income of these temples, especially as we find that the large landed estate requires a full-timed man to efficiently manage them. It will be rather unpleasant for a Mahant who is looked upon not merely as a secular head but also as a religious head, by worshippers from all parts of India, if most of his time is to be devoted to attending to a number of secular questions and troubles, and disputes consequent in managing landed estate. It will therefore be much better that this religious head dissociates himself from certain secular functions, especially those of managing the estates. From that point of view, I think it is absolutely necessary that the Mahant should be disburdened of this responsibility.

“ I personally also to a certain extent agree with my hon. Friend that in the Select Committee some of the provisions of the Bill do need some change, and one of those provisions, as my hon. Friend suggested, is that regarding the powers to be conferred on the committee. I hope that the objections raised by my hon. Friend Mr. Parthasarathi Ayyangar, will also be gone into by the Select Committee. Some of us believe that even if the allegations made against the present Mahant with regard to improper use of funds and inefficient management of the estates and his not being above temptation are found untrue by the court, even then a case has been amply made out, as I said, for the appointment of one, who is not connected with the religious ceremonies of the temple to look after the proper management and administration of the vast landed estates. As such, Sir, I believe that the decision which the District Court of Chittoor may be likely to arrive at the various allegations against the present Mahant ought not in any way to deter us from pursuing the course outlined in this Bill. I therefore heartily support this motion.”

* Mr. C. R. PARTHASARATHI AYYANGAR:—“ Coming from a district 3 p.m. in which these temples are situated, I can give some information about the state of affairs there. My Friend, the Mover, has considered only one side of the picture and made his comments upon it. In a question of this kind we have to fall back upon a considerable reserve of reason and commonsense, because we have two versions and to find out the equilibrium between the two is probably the work of this House and more so of the Select Committee. One thing I may say, that reading the various judicial pronouncements from 1898 and subsequent petitions

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that have been presented to the District Court and the High Court, we find that it has been amply demonstrated that whoever might be trustee he must exercise reason and commonsense and judgment for the purpose of looking into the affairs of the temple and he must have first-hand knowledge of the working of the scheme. No person should be appointed who is not well versed in the affairs of the temple. Suppose a Commissioner is appointed, he will have to be changed after a certain period, and in the case of such appointment frequent changes will affect the administration for worse. What is happening with regard to this devasthanam during the last thirty years? Till 1843, the Government was in charge and the income of the devasthanam was only one lakh. The amount left over after meeting the expenditure was credited to Government. Not a pie was spent on the devasthanam. What do we find now? The income has risen from one lakh to Rs. 15 lakhs. Is it due to mismanagement? Secondly at the time when the Government was in charge of this trust they never invested any money over the purchase of property or any accumulating fund for the devasthanam. But we find that since the Mahant came to be in charge of the trust, the trust has been considerably enlarged and it owns landed properties in several taluks. Thirdly, as regards education and social amenities, there are two educational institutions, one in Tirupati and another in Vellore, and both of them are running on up-to-date lines. Anyone who goes there will observe that both of them are fit to be raised to the status of a first grade college. When the Mission institution at Tirupati was abolished, an application was made to the devasthanam that Muhammadan students should be admitted into the devasthanam institutions which was granted, and from thence Muhammadan students were freely admitted into those institutions. (Mr. Schamnad: Hear, hear.) Another improvement is that the whole of the hills has now been electrified. That is to say, people can go up and down at any time of the night without fear of any kind. About Rs. 40,000 is expected to be the net return. The Municipality of Tirupati is now wanting to supply the town with electricity from the devasthanam plant, and there are other consumers also, so that the devasthanam stands to gain by this electrification scheme. Then, I may mention the many choultries built on a large scale for the accommodation of pilgrims and every attempt is made to cater to the intellectual, physical, and moral wants of the people going there. Does this not mean the exercise of discretion on the part of the trustee? If a Commissioner were to be appointed in his place, will he have the experience, sympathy and understanding that are required for the purpose of meeting the wants of the people there? I will request the House to take into consideration all these facts and not be guided by one-sided versions. A man who is considered excellent in one line may have equal deficiencies in the other. Any number of rules and legislations cannot create an ideal man. The appointment of a Commissioner will in no way solve the problem. We have a Board of four Commissioners for Endowments, and they might have gone there and

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sat down and laid their fingers on certain defects. That kind of thing won't meet the wants of the people. What is wanted is larger understanding and spiritual perception. I do not mean to say that the institution is run on model lines. But so long as a human being is in charge of the administration, there will be defects and need for improvement. But you must take the rose along with the thorns. Probably you may work out a scheme of the most wonderful type in the Select Committee. (Mr. T. A. Ramalingam Chettiyar: You are also there.) This is a religious institution and it has been going on for a long time; that shows there is a power behind which keeps it going. So, let us not put one more log of wood in the way of the administration of this devasthanam. We want the spiritual power to be retained. The spiritual power is wielded for the sake of the whole of India and I will not be a party to any proceeding which will curtail it in the least degree. In spite of the Religious Endowments Board, there are many temples in Southern India which are a disgrace to our land. Why has this institution alone come to the forefront? I daresay that no man that you are going to appoint can clean the Aegean stables. He will prove to be a dismal failure and will bring down the spiritual institution to the level of an Aegean stable which it will take many years to cleanse. Living in Chittoor district, being in the midst of affairs and having watched the institution for 30 years, with the weight of the knowledge I possess, I must say it requires the greatest prudence and considerable wisdom and deep foresight to find out a man who will be able to answer to our expectations.

“Certainly it is no easy task. So, why not say, in the first clause of the Bill itself, that you do not want the institution of Mahantship any longer and that hereafter the Hathiramji Mutt should have nothing to do with the devasthanams. It would have been better and saner to adopt that course than this course of saying in a roundabout way that you will make the Mahant a zero. The Mahant's spiritual claim is undoubted. Rightly understood, spirituality means efficient capacity to administer. Spirituality does not mean growing a beard and sitting in a corner of the mutt. (Voices: ‘Hear, hear.’) Spirituality has in it an effective dynamic force. A man who is to occupy the post of spiritual head of a large community should be in a position to set an example to the world. Are you going to find a Commissioner of that kind? I have no doubt you will fail. If you want to reform the institution, you have at hand the provisions of the Hindu Religious Endowments Act which can be exploited to the full. If you do that, you can make the institution 1,000 times better than what it is now. If you are incapable of utilizing those provisions, I am not certainly going to subscribe to the theory that further powers are necessary. Anyhow, Sir, I have no objection to the Bill being referred to a Select Committee, but I firmly believe that the provisions for the appointment of the Commissioner and the 15 members though they look well on paper will not easily lend themselves to be translated into action.”

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[31st October 1931]

Mrs. A. ALAMELUMANGA THAYARAMMAL :—“ திருமலை தேவஸ்தான சீர்

திருத்த மசோதா விஷயமாய் இச்சட்டசபை அங்கத்தினர் பலரும் பேசினார்கள். இந்த திருப்பதி தேவஸ்தானம் மிகமதிப்புள்ளது. தென்னிந்தியாவிலுள்ள தேவஸ்தானங்களில் மிகப்பெரிய விசேஷமான வைஷ்ணவ ஸ்தலம். அதற்குச் சொத்து கோடிக்கணக்காயிருக்குமென்று கூறுகின்றார்கள். லக்ஷக்கணக்கான திரவியம் உண்டாயில் சேர்வதற்கு அநேக லக்ஷக்கணக்கான யாத்திரிகர்கள் வருவதே காரணமாகும். யாத்திரை வாசிகளுக்குள் அதிகமாய் தென்னாட்டினர்களும், வடநாட்டினர் குறைவாயும் வருகிறார்களென்றே சொல்லவேண்டும். சுவாமிக்குக் காணிக்கைகள் செலுத்துபவர்கள் தென்னாட்டினராவர். இந்நாட்டிலிருக்கும் ஏழைகளும், பிரபுக்களும், கற்றவர்களும், கல்லாதவர்களும், தரித்திரர்கள் முதற் கொண்டு தனவந்தர்கள்வரை யாவரும் கடவுளின் கடாக்ஷத்தைப் பெருவதற்குச் செலுத்தும்பணம் வீணில் செலவழிக்காமல் பாதுகாக்கவேண்டுமென்பதே சீர் திருத்த மசோதாவினால் உண்டாகவேண்டிய நன்மையாயிருக்கின்றது என்பதே எனது அபிப்பிராயமாகவிருக்கின்றது. இப்பொழுது ஒருவாறு காலம் மாறி வருகின்றது. ஏற்றத்தாழ்வுகளைச் சகலரும் சமமென்று சொல்லிவருகின்றோம். ஜனநாயகமென்று சொல்வதற் சுகிர்தமில்லை. சொல்வதற்கேற்றபடி வேலை செய்யவேண்டும். சுவாமிக்குப் பிரார்த்தனை செய்துகொண்டு பொன்னும், வெள்ளியும், தங்க நகைகளும், தட்டுமுட்டுச் சாமான்களும் வேண்டியமட்டும் வந்து குவிக்கின்றன. அவைகளிலிருந்து சுவாமிக்குச் செய்யவேண்டிய நிதியைப் பூஜைக்கும், நீதியான உற்சவ ஊர்கோலங்களுக்கும் செலவிடப்போக மிகுந்த சொத்தைக்கொண்டு நாட்டிற்குவேண்டிய பலநற்காரியங்களுக்குத் தவிர செய்யலாம். எனக்கு முன்பேசிய சகோதர அங்கத்தினர் தேவஸ்தான சொத்திலிருந்து வேலூரிலும், திருப்பதியிலும் பாடசாலைகளை வைத்து நடத்தி வருகின்றார்கள் என்றும், மகம் மதிய பிள்ளைகளையும் மடபேதமின்றி அந்தப் பாடசாலைகளில் சேர்த்துக்கொள்ளுகிறார்களென்றும் குறிப்பிட்டார்கள். சுவாமி மனைவியே பூபி நாச்சியாராகையால் இதில் புதுமையொன்றுமில்லை. வைஷ்ணவ சமயம் ஜாதி சமயபேதமின்றி எல்லாரையும் ஒன்றுபடுத்தவந்த சமயமென்பதை யாவரும் அறிவர். கோயில் சொத்தைக்கொண்டு நம் நாட்டிற்கு முக்கியமாய் வேண்டிய கல்வியைப் பரவச் செய்யலாம். இப்போது தேவஸ்தானத்திலிருந்து இரண்டொரு பாடசாலைகளுக்காக செலவழிப்பது விசேஷமல்ல. மேனாட்டிலிருக்கும் ஆக்ஸ்போர்ட், கேம்பிரிட்ஜ் முதலிய சர்வ கலாசாலைகளைப்போல வைத்து நடத்த முயலவேண்டும். பலரிடமிருந்து வரும் பணத்தை நல்லபழியில் பலரும் அனுப்பிக்கச் செய்ய வேண்டும். கடவுளுக்குச் செய்வதெல்லாம் நமக்கு நன்மையளிக்க வேண்டுமென்று செய்வதேயாகும். ஆதலால் பொது ஜனங்களுக்கு வேண்டிய உத்தம காரியங்களுக்கு அத்திரவியத்தைச் செலவிடப்பார்க்கவேண்டும். பாஷை வேஷங்களில் வேறுபட்ட இந்நாட்டினர்வரைவந்த வடநாட்டிலிருந்த பைராகிகள் வசமாவிற்று. அவர்கள் மகந்துக்கொள்ளும் சொல்வார்கள். கௌரவ தலைவர்களாகி கோவில் சொத்தை சத்தினியோகம் செய்யாமலிருந்திருக்கிறார்களென்று சில ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்பே பலரும் அறிந்திருக்கின்றனர். அவர்களையோல் பலவிதமான குற்றங்குறைகள் முன்பே வெளிப்பட்ட விஷயம். இக்காலத்திலுங்கூட கோவில் சம்பந்தமான விவகாரங்கள் அடிக்கடி கோர்ட்டு கச்சேரிகளில் நடந்து வருகின்றன. இவ்விஷயம் என்னைவிட வக்கீல்களாகிய சட்டசபை சகோதர அங்கத்தினர்கள் நன்கறிவார்கள். கோர்ட்டுகளில் விவகாரங்கள் நடத்தும் காலத்தில் சுவாமியைப் பற்றியும், கோயிலைப்பற்றியும், ஆகம் தந்திரங்களைப்பற்றியும் அடிக்கடி பேசிவருவது கடவுளை பூஜிப்பதாகாது. உண்மையான பக்தி செலுத்துவோருமாகும்போலாம். இனிமேலாவது அம்மாதிரி நடைபெறாமல் கமிஷன் மூலமாகவும், கமிட்டி மூலமாகவும் நன்கு விசாரணைசெய்து கோர்ட்டுகளுக்கு வீண்செலவு செய்யவிடாமல் பாதுகாக்கவேண்டும். சகல ஜனங்களுக்கும் அனுசூலமான வழியில் திருப்பதி தேவஸ்தான சட்டத்தைத் திருத்தி அமைக்கவேண்டும். பொதுவாய் தேவஸ்தானச் சட்டம் கொண்டுவந்த இராஜா இராமராயநிங்கார் அவர்களுடைய அபிப்பிராயமும் நல்லபிப்பிராயமேயாகும். வீண் விவகாரங்களுக்கு அதிகமாய் இனி இடங்கொட்டாமலிருக்கவேண்டும். வீண் செலவுகளை நிறுத்தவேண்டும். சிக்கனம் சிக்கனம் என்று எங்கும் ஒரே பேச்சாயிருந்துவரும் இக்காலத்தில் கோவில் பணத்தை வீணாக்கப்படாது. பிரஜைகளுக்குப் பயன்படும்படி.

31st October 1931]

[Mrs. A. Alamelumanga Thayarammal]

செய்வதுதான் சுவாமிக்கும் பிரீதியான காரியம். ஆதலால் திருமலை தேவஸ்தான மசோதா சீர்திருத்தம் பெற்று, நாட்டிற்கு நன்மை யளிக்கவேண்டிய வழியில் வேலை செய்யவேண்டுமென்றே ஆதரிக்கின்றேன்.”

Swami A. S. SAHAJANANDAM :—“ கனம் தலைவர் அவர்களே! எங்களுக்கும் இந்த பில்லில் உரிமை இருக்கிறது. திருமலை திருப்பதிக்குத் தாழ்த்தப்பட்டவர்களும் ஏராளமாகச் செல்கிறார்கள். ஏராளமாகக் காணிக்கைச் செலுத்துகிறார்கள். ஆனால் அவர்களுக்கு அங்கு பறபெருமாள் கோயிலென்று ஒன்றை ஏற்படுத்தியுள்ளார்கள். அந்தக் கோயில் பாழடைந்து சப்பாத்திக் காட்டால் சூழப்பட்டுள்ளது. ஆனால் காணிக்கைகளை மலையின் அடிவாரத்தில் யாதவ வகுப்பைச் சேர்ந்த ஒருவர் எடுத்துக் கொண்டு போகிறார். அது அவர்க்கு மிராசு பாத்தியமாம். திருப்பதி தேவஸ்தானத்திற்கு ஏராளமான வரும்படி வருகிறது. ஒரு ஜில்லா போர்டுக்கு எவ்வளவு வரும்படி வேண்டுமோ அவ்வளவிற்கும் அதிகமாக வருகிறது. ஒழுங்கான முறையில் நிர்வாகம் செய்தால் பொது ஜனங்களுக்கு எவ்வளவோ நன்மை செய்யலாம். ஆதலால், இந்த பில் வரவேண்டுமென்று பொது ஜனங்கள் விரும்புகிறார்கள். நாங்கள் மிகவும் சந்தோஷமாக வரவேற்கிறோம்! மகந்தாக வருபவர் நல்லவராயிருக்கலாம் அவர் தனிமையாக நடத்துவதால் அவர் மீது பலர் கேஸ் எடுக்கவும் அவநம்பிக்கைக் கொள்ளவும் இடமுண்டாகிறது. அதற்காக ஒரு போர்டும் ஒரு காரிய கர்த்தாவும் ஏற்படுவது மிகவும் அவசியம். போர்டும் காரியகர்த்தாவும் மகந்துக்குப் பாது காப்பாயிருப்பார்கள். சில கனந்தங்கிய அங்கத்தினர்கள் பொது ஜன அபிப்பிராயத்தை தெரிய வேண்டுமென்றார்கள். பொது ஜனங்கள் பில் வேண்டுமென்றே விரும்புகிறார்கள். இக்கனந்தங்கிய சபையிலுள்ளவர்கள் பொது ஜனங்களால் தேர்ந்தெடுக்கப்பட்டவர்களே. நமது அபிப்பிராயமே பொது ஜன அபிப்பிராயமென்று கொள்ள வேண்டும். தற்காலம் குடியரசு வேண்டுமென்று நாடு விரும்புகிறது. மகந்து நிர்வாகம் போர்டு முன்னிலையில் வரக்கூடாதென்பவர்கள் சுய ஆட்சி வேண்டாமென்பவர்களே. கடவுள் செயலன்றி ஒரணுவும் அசையாது அவனது திருவுண்பாங்காலேயே இந்த பில் கொண்டுவரப்பட்டிருக்கிறது. இதனை சர்க்குலேஷன்விட வேண்டாம். செலெக்ட் கமிட்டி மூலம் பரிசீலனை செய்து விரைவில் பில்லை ஆக்டாக் கொண்டு வர வேண்டுமென்று கேட்டுக் கொள்ளுகிறேன்.”

Mr. M. A. MUTHIAH CHETTIYAR :—“ Mr. President, I beg to move that the question be now put.”

Khan Bahadur YAHYA ALI SAHIB Bahadur :—“ I second it.”

The closure motion was put and carried.

Mr. C. R. Parthasarathi Ayyangar's motion for circulation of the Bill for eliciting opinion was then put and lost.

Then, Mr. Manikkavelu Nayakar's motion to suspend the operation of Standing Order 39 (2) and to refer his Bill to a Select Committee consisting of the Members proposed by him was put and carried. The Bill was referred to the Select Committee accordingly.

Mr. DANIEL THOMAS :—“ Mr. President, under Standing Order 33 I beg to move—

‘that items 2 to 15 on the Agenda be postponed and that the House do proceed to consider item 16’”

Mr. M. DEVADASAN :—“ I second it.”

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—“ The question is that all items up to item 16 be held over.”

The motion was carried.